

March 3, 2011

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Firstly I would like to thank you for your services to our State Government.

I am writing to you today in regards to the House Bill #6380 to eliminate the Board of Education Services for the Blind (BESB). I am a parent to a 6 year old legally blind child. He lost his vision from a form of cancer called Retinoblastoma. When he first lost his sight we didn't know where to turn. We learned about BESB and they have been our saving grace. Not knowing what was needed to make sure our son got the proper education we started our search. We found BESB and since my son has begun school with the help of BESB has not fallen behind in school and is progressing quite nicely.

I feel that your plan to break up BESB into 2 different divisions of the State would do irrevocable damage to not only the state but to the children and adults who rely on BESB's staff. The people at BESB are the top of the top in this area. BESB knows what they are doing and how to work with the Blind to make sure that when the time comes the people they help are able to survive as independent adults. Not only does BESB provide services to children in school but there are also summer camps, weekend get togethers, holiday independent skill workshops, and parent seminars.

The parent seminars are wonderful for the sake of the parent who doesn't know how to raise a child who can't see. If these seminars were not available parents would never know the little tricks that can help their children do something easier or to know how to teach these children skills seeing children learn through their sight. One example is body language. Blind children do not know the cues because they have not witnessed it as seeing children have.

Going back to education of the children, BESB has been able to provide the necessary equipment to make it possible for blind students to do the same work their peers are doing. If these pieces of equipment were all of a sudden taken from these children their educations would be in trouble.

Without the employees of this division the resources, effectiveness, experience, and love for our blind community would be loss as well. These people know what they are doing, please don't take the comfort level our children feel with them be taken away either. I also don't know where my family would be without BESB's guidance and assurance that everything will be fine and our son will be independent.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kristine Bacik

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